# Accounting for Young Children's Competence in Educational Research: New Perspectives on Research Ethics

Susan Danby and Ann Farrell
Queensland University of Technology

## Abstract

*Educational researchers working with young children face ethical issues when researching the talk and interactions of young children. Issues around the competence of children to participate in research pose challenges to educational researchers and to the young participants and their families, within what are seen as increasingly risky and regulated research environments. This paper examines some of these issues in light of recent sociological perspectives that account for children as competent practitioners of their social worlds. Drawing on research investigating the governance of the lives of young children in Australia, we examine the rights of children to be both seen and heard as competent research participants. These sociological directions afford opportunities to reconsider the ethical issues around research with young children. Such an approach breaks new ground in early childhood education research.*

## Introduction

New perspectives on childhood have informed research in early childhood education in recent times. Previously, the traditional view of researching young children was strongly influenced by the developmental approach, which still dominates today. This perspective frames the child as developing, and as an incomplete version of an adult. This view has been challenged in recent times (Danby 2002, James, Jenks and Prout, 1998, Tobin 1995, Waksler 1991, 1996), as researchers have suggested an alternate view of childhood that accounts for children's constructions of their social worlds, and begins with the notion that children are competent interpreters of their everyday worlds.

From the developmental perspective, interactional competence can be understood as children learning how to develop social skills and build friendships. Socialisation theory has also formulated interactional competence to mean a developmental learning process where children learn how to enter and participate in their social organisations (cf. Speier 1982). Such a developmental perspective posits children as 'underdeveloped' (Waksler 1991), and lacking power and knowledge (Waksler 1996). This means that the child is viewed as developing and, therefore, not knowing the normative rules of how to act in everyday situations (Hutchby and Moran-Ellis 1998). As Waksler says, however, this approach views children 'as in their very nature not grown up and thus *not something* rather than *something*' (1991, p. 63, emphasis in orginal).

Compare the approach that describes children as developing into adults with one that views children as already competent (Mackay 1991). This is the view of researchers working within the sociology of childhood framework (James et al. 1998, Mayall 2002, 2003). This sociological approach sees children, through their talk and interaction, as participating actively in the construction of their own social situations. This version of childhood, then, sees the world of the child and childhood as being constituted in relation to the adult's social world, as each influence the other. Understandings gained from this perspective show how young children undertake complex and competent interactional work, often within the social arena of adults.

These perspectives of childhood and young children have the potential to inform research in early childhood education. The notion that children are competent practitioners of their social worlds rather than merely developing towards adulthood flows into a very different research program based on very different categories of interpretation. This perspective, then, is taken into account by the adult researcher in any analysis of the child's talk and actions. In this paper, we draw upon these sociological directions to show how this leads to different ethical considerations than those that have addressed traditional understandings of children as pre-competent or developing in competence (Danby 2002, Mackay 1991, Waksler 1991). Such an approach breaks new ground in research in early childhood education.

## New challenges in engaging in educational research with young children

Research in early childhood contexts is being conducted in what are seen to be increasingly risky spaces (Beck 1992, 2000). Homes, schools and communities, as popular sites of educational research, are considered to be where children are most likely to be exposed to forms of risk associated with cultural, social, political and

economic forces (Mayall 2002, 2003, Moss 2002, Moss and Petrie 2002). To manage and minimise risk, educational research is being governed more and more by legislation, policy and practices developed by adults, but for children. These structural and cultural dimensions of research spaces are, therefore, presenting new challenges for educational research.

Increasing regulation of research spaces as well as research activity exemplifies the more pervasive governance of the everyday lives of children by various child-focused regulatory devices in countries such as the United Kingdom (James and James 1999, 2001, James and Prout 1997) and Australia (Cashmore 1999, Farrell 2001, Jamrozik and Nocella 1998, Mendes 1999). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (Castelle 1990), the British *Children Act 1989,* Queensland's *Child Protection Act 1999* and the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000*, for example, iterate the international and national focus on child protection and human rights. An allied regulatory device that addresses children's protective rights in research is Australia's National Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Research with Humans generated federally by the Australian Health Ethics Committee (2003). The impetus for such devices may well be laudable adult concern for the safety of children in public and private spaces (James and James 2001, Jenks 1996, Walkerdine 1999). Such practices could be described as devices designed to minimise adult concerns about safety, which may be achieved at a social cost to the child, the object of the protective concern.

The protective regulation of children, in order to deal with 'serious social and public order problems' (Wyness 2000, p. 122), is a contested issue (Cockburn 1998, Freeman 1992, Roche 1996). There is tension between adults regulating children's lives, on the one hand, and giving voice to children's protective rights, on the other (Danby and Farrell 2002). Measures that purport to protect and sustain the rights of children may, in turn, work to limit their rights as, in reality, children do not have the same rights as adults (James and James 2001, Wyness 2000). These protective and regulatory dimensions, therefore, pose new challenges for the ethical conduct of research within early years settings.

## New challenges for research ethics

New challenges emerge from both the protective regulation of the lives of children and the more pervasive regulation of the research enterprise. These challenges are exemplified in our research on governance and the everyday lives of children in Australia. The research involves a pilot study (2002) of 30 children aged five to eleven years in two primary schools (one government and one alternative), and ongoing research funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery grant (2004–06).

Governance, in our work, is defined as the complex and intersecting systems of regulation that operate to show up frames of relevance for children's everyday participation and active engagement in sites such as school, home and community (Danby and Farrell 2002, James and James 2001).

In our 2002 pilot study (Danby, Farrell, Leiminer and Powell 2004), 30 children attending primary school were invited to engage in informal (audio-recorded) conversations about their experiences of making decisions throughout the day. At the same occasion, each child was asked to mark on a time-chart the times and places where they thought they did or did not have autonomy. Our methodology of representation sought to generate children's own accounts of their everyday lives within schools as 'political, social and economic sites of childhood' (Moss and Petrie 2002, p. 41), rather than as mere physical locations. Questions guiding the conversations included: What sorts of things do you think you should have a say about? Can you think of a time when you wanted to have a say about something but didn't get a chance? When is it okay with you for others to make decisions about what you do?

What became evident was that the children marked on their time-charts and discussed those private moments within their private social spaces that were outside adult regulation. The children explained these moments as significant and desirous. For example, Mel, aged ten years, commented: 'It's glorious when Tim's [her older brother] on the phone, Mum and Dad have gone out shopping, get to sit back on the comfy chair and watch TV.'

Further, we found that school had a regulatory influence on children's experiences, even when they were at home, and that parents were enlisted as agents of surveillance (i.e. as homework supervisors), thus making the geographical space of the home the moral space for school surveillance (Danby and Farrell 2002, Keogh 1996).

Our research perspectives and, in particular, the ethical aspects of gaining and maintaining children's consent to participate in our research, drew on key theoretical assumptions derived from the sociology of childhood. This perspective sees children as active participants and competent interpreters of their own worlds (cf. Alanen and Mayall 2001, Corsaro 1997, Danby and Baker 1998, Hutchby and Moran-Ellis 1998, James, Jenks and Prout 1998, Mackay 1991, Mayall 2003, Prout and James 1997, Waksler 1991). In this way, childhood cannot be described as a universal experience, but one that is constructed within specific times, places and contexts.

These perspectives on children's competence to consent to and participate in research supplant the developmental model of childhood that describes children as developing

competence and social agency (cf. Cannella and Kincheloe 2002, James et al. 1998, Walkerdine 1999). Developmentalism, germane to nineteenth-century biology and philosophy, conceptualised children, quite logically, as 'human becomings' (Phillips and Alderson 2002, p. 6) who will one day become adult humans.

In the 2002 study, each participant provided written consent to participate in the study by signing their name or making their special mark on the consent form included in the information and consent packages. The information packages for the children were distributed for them to take home, and then we visited the classrooms and spoke directly with the children about the study. The children took this opportunity to ask questions about the study itself and the research activities, and about us as researchers. One child indicated that, while they wished to participate, their parents did not give permission. This raised theoretical questions regarding adults contesting children's desire to participate as emblematic of adult governance of children's lives.

Prior to engaging in the research activities with each child, the researcher reviewed the consent form together with the child to ensure that they still wanted to participate, and reminded them of their right to drop out of the study at any time without any questions being asked. Many children described this experience of providing consent as a new experience in their lives, as well as a positive experience (Danby et al. 2004). For example, Jacob used the metaphor of being 'in heaven' to describe the opportunity to provide consent.

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher | How did you feel about actually being asked if you wanted to do it or if you didn't want to do it? |
| Jacob | I was in heaven. |
| Researcher | Yeah (laughter) how come? |
| Jacob | Usually I don't get, uhmm, decisions about those particular things like in school. |

In another instance, John declined to participate in the study, although his parents had signed the permission slip.

| | |
|---|---|
| John | I'll read it by myself. |
| Researcher | OK, sure. |
| John | (reads form) |
| Researcher | So what do you think?<br>(2.2) |

| | |
|---|---|
| John | No.<br>(0.4) |
| Researcher | No. You would not like to do this? (2.0) That's OK. You can decide now to join in or you can decide now that you don't want to join in (1.8) and I don't mind either way. |
| John | I don't want to join in. |
| Researcher | OK, sure. So, um, did you want to… () Oh OK, well we can just leave the form blank then and I can just make a note on it saying that you decided that you didn't want to join in. OK. Well, thanks for thinking about it and making that decision. Um, (1.0) I… It's okay for you to go back (.) to the class then (.) now, John. OK. (.) Thanks. |
| John | That's OK. |

By inviting the children in this way to re-affirm their decision to participate, consent continued to be constructed as ongoing throughout the project participation.

This research orientation allowed the children themselves to act as gatekeepers of the research (Alderson 2000a, Danby 1998) and co-researchers in the generation of the ethnographic record (Baker 1997, Christensen and James 2000, Graue and Walsh 1998, Hood, Kelley and Mayall 1996). This orientation permitted us to enter their worlds and to respect their versions of reality. Further, it acknowledged possible status and power imbalances between adults and children, imbalances that had the capacity to distort the ethical conduct of the research.

## New challenges involved in listening to young children in research

The conceptual and methodological challenges of studies such as ours are emblematic of the new challenges of listening to children in the research encounter. While traditional developmental research may have involved engagement with children (for example, through observation, interview and/or intervention) our work departs from this approach in its theoretical commitment to listening to children, even children in the early years of schooling, as reliable informants of their own experience. In this respect, our work is indicative of the growing methodological and analytic interest in listening to children (Australian Law Reform Commission and Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1997, Clark, McQuail and Moss 2003, Danby and Baker 2001, Farrell, Tayler and Tennent 2002, Morrow 1999, 2001a, 2001b, Tennent, Tayler, Farrell and Gahan 2002).

The sensitivities of listening to young children in ways that respect their competence, on the one hand, and recognise the power differentials between adults and children, on the other, require ongoing consideration and negotiation. We were always aware that the children's accounts may have been tempered by their realisation that the researcher was also an adult. To provide an illustration from the 2002 study (Danby, Farrell, Leiminer and Powell 2004), Oralee, in her account below, describes how her behaviour is subject to ongoing regulatory measures as a part of her everyday experience at school.

| | |
|---|---|
| Oralee | And then... when I get to school I have to… I have to pay attention. |
| Researcher | Ah-hmm |
| | (long pause while O is writing on timeline) |
| Researcher | Who do you have to pay attention to? |
| Oralee | My teacher. |
| Researcher | And how long do you have to pay attention for? |
| Oralee | Umm, the whole time he's talking. And I have to look at him otherwise he thinks that we're not paying attention. |
| Researcher | And do you think that's accurate? Do you think that people have to look to pay attention or do you think that young people can still be paying attention without looking? |
| Oralee | Well, depends if they're fiddling… |

Here, Oralee commented specifically on the ways that adults, such as teachers, seek confirmation that regulatory measures are being adhered to. In her account, Oralee appears to be supporting the measures that the teacher uses, although there is some resistance.

The interpretations that we, as researchers, produce are theorised accounts that represent our sociological understandings of the social worlds of children and adults. In this way, we are engaged in producing explicit accounts that critique the structural conditions that exist in both the conduct of research as well as the interpretation of that research (Foley 2002, Pillow 2003). Such reflexive interpretations are conscious decisions on our part to scrutinise not just the interview data, but also the social and historical moments of both the context of the study and our own perspectives on childhood and children. Here we engage in a deconstructive enterprise that situates the claims that we make, not as 'taken-for-granted reality' (Foley 2002, p. 485), but dependent upon particular understandings, in this instance, those derived from the sociology of childhood. A challenge in our research, therefore, was to practise reflexivity through discussion around consent, and to

acknowledge residual adherence to hierarchies in sites of research production, where the performance of children may remain peripheral to that of the adult (Bell 1993).

From this theoretical standpoint, a key challenge in listening to children in research is making decisions with them, not just for them (Clark et al. 2003). This is particularly so in the ethical processes of 'consent, access, privacy and confidentiality' (Mauthner 1997, p. 17). Alderson's (1992, 2000a, 2000b, 2002) work in medical research points out that such processes are often antithetical to common practice. In much medical research the researcher seeks children's consent in contexts unfamiliar to children, rather than in the context of children's own lives where they may be confident and knowledgeable about their experience. The criticism that children's consent is sought in contexts that may be unfamiliar to them is not necessarily confined to medical research. Alderson (1993, 2000b, 2002) notes that informed consent is often seen as a one-way process of the researcher informing participants rather than as a two-way exchange of information. Alderson (2002) argues, moreover, that the central features of consent are how people inwardly digest information, weigh it up in light of personal values, waver between opposite options and gradually gain the resolve to make and stand by a risky decision. Accordingly, these invisible thoughts and feelings are hard to research, except through in-depth interviews or conversations, and usually involve relatively small samples. Alderson (2002) adds that, while generalisation may not be drawn easily from few cases, a view of a three- or four-year-old who shows a mature grasp of her situation may refute beliefs that children cannot have such understandings until they are much older.

Paradoxically, researchers often question parents, teachers and care givers for their views about children's understanding or capacity to consent and may take little account of how adults may be perpetuating stereotypical, normative views of children as ignorant, capricious and untrustworthy. Adult decision making about what they regard as best for the child in the research is typically justified as adults operating within a 'principle of "care"' (Jenks 1996, p. 14) in order to protect and nurture children. This 'adultist' (Mason and Steadman 1997, p. 31) version of childhood assumes that adults know best, that they make decisions over and for children and that children accept these decisions.

The obverse side of this normative view, that young children cannot be held accountable for their views because they may too young to be able to competently communicate their view, or be unduly open to adult pressure, has been challenged in national and international arenas, with advocacy for children's rights to be seen and heard in judicial decision making (ALRC and HREOC 1997, Sutherland 1992). This is, however, a relatively recent perspective, although one that legitimates children's human rights to engage in research as competent participants.

## New perspectives that legitimate children's rights in research

That children have rights to (agree to) participate in research as competent informants of their own experience is a departure from much research with young children. New perspectives from the sociology of childhood legitimate children's rights to participate in (and withdraw from) research. Such rights reflect, in part, the history of children's rights as human rights.

Historically, children's rights and the child liberation movement, in western industrialised nations at least, were arguably borne of mid-twentieth century resistance to hegemonic racial, ethnic, gender and economic oppression (Archard 1993, Farson 1974, Firestone 1971, Holt 1974, Minow 1986). Over time, children's rights became the subject of legal theory (Eekelaar 1994, Freeman 1996, Freeman and Veerman 1992, Smith 1997, Veerman 1992), philosophy (Archard 1993, Ekman Ladd 1996), political science (O'Neill 1995) and social science (Bell 1993, Franklin 1986, 1995). Then, in the latter part of the twentieth century, children's rights came to be enshrined in global human rights pronouncements such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.

Noteworthy in recent years in Australia was the recognition of the serious lack of children's human rights in Australia's legal processes. This is evident in the *Seen and Heard* report, produced in 1997 by the Australian Law Reform Commission and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. This report found that Australia's legal processes had, in fact, ignored, marginalised and mistreated children. It advocated change across all levels of government and across all jurisdictions to give full effect to the rights of children to be both seen and heard. Concurrent with the Australian report, an English analysis of children's rights to consent to medical treatment conducted by Smith demonstrated that the English courts reflected 'society's ambivalence towards the dependent status of children' (1997, p. 103). Prior to that analysis, Bell noted that English law saw children's rights as the 'deployment of childhood in the law' (1993, p. 369), with legal power exerted over and above both the parent and the child.

Despite the evidence of incremental socio-legal support for children's rights in research, there also remains considerable resistance to children's human rights. Franklin notes that such resistance 'straddles both the public realm of children's involvement in education and the care arrangements of the state and the private realm of the family' (1995, p. 90). Similarly, Lansdown (2001) argues that resistance is based on a fear that children, left unrestrained by adults, pose a threat to the social order; within a pervasive cultural tradition that parents, not the state, have the prime responsibility for their children. Children's rights, within this framework, are seen to subordinate parental child-rearing prerogatives.

Pursuant of this view, American ethicist Friedman Ross (1998) proposes a model of parental decision making for children within the intimacy of the family. This model is predicated on families possessing interdependence and commitment to mutual wellbeing. In other words, children's rights are subsumed within parental rights. Alderson (2003) contests this view of privatised parenthood not only because families may not necessarily possess these qualities, but also because the socio-legal system about which Friedman Ross theorises does not adhere to internationally recognised statutory requirements for children's rights (such as the UNCRC 1989).

In short, the grounds for resistance to children's rights as well as the arguments in favour of children's rights reflect, in part, their adherents' conceptualisations of children and childhood. The conceptualisation outlined in this paper is one that sees children as interacting competently with adults, including their parents and teachers, and researchers, in the research agenda. This conceptualisation emphasises the pursuit of autonomy, 'optimally positioning children to develop their own perception of their wellbeing as they enter adulthood: not of foreclosing on the potential for such' (Eekelaar 1994, p. 58). Eekelaar's (1994) injunction, a decade ago, supports children's rights, including their rights in educational research and, indeed, their competence to participate in the social processes in which the research is enmeshed.

## Conclusion

This paper has identified key ethical considerations in research with young children. The ethical processes of children participating in the research enterprise involve researchers listening to children regarding events and experiences that relate to them. This demands respecting children from their own standpoints (Butler 1996, Mayall 2002). Such a perspective involves describing children's everyday experiences in ways that recognise them as competent witnesses to their own lives. It is this perspective that drives our research on governance of the lives of children, allowing us to generate, with them, their own accounts of everyday experience. This tenet of our work is central to sociological understandings of childhood. As such, it has the potential to offer new directions for early childhood research.

## References

Alanen, L. and B. Mayall, eds. (2001) *Conceptualizing Child–Adult Relations*, Routledge Falmer, London.

Alderson, P. (1992) Rights of children and young people, in A. Coote, ed., *The Welfare of Citizens: Developing New Social Rights*, Rivers Oram Press, London.

Alderson, P. (1993) *Children's Consent to Surgery*, Open University Press, Buckingham.

Alderson, P. (2000a) Children as researchers: the effects of participation rights on research methodology, in P. Christensen and A. James, eds., *Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices*, Falmer Press, London.

Alderson, P. (2000b) *Young Children's Rights: Exploring Beliefs, Principles and Practice*, Jessica Kingsley, London.

Alderson, P. (2002) Children, healing, suffering and voluntary consent, in G. Bendelow, M. Carpenter, C. Vautier and S. Williams, eds., *Gender, Health and Healing: The Public–Private Divide*, Routledge Falmer, London.

Alderson, P. (2003) *Institutional Rites and Rights: A Century of Childhood*, Institute of Education, University of London, London.

Archard, D. (1993) *Children, Rights and Childhood*, Routledge, London.

Australian Health Ethics Committee (2003) *National Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Research with Humans*, Australian Health Ethics Committee, Canberra.

Australian Law Reform Commission and Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1997) *Seen and Heard: Priority for Children in the Legal Process*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Baker, C. (1997) Ethnomethodological studies of talk in educational settings, in B. Davies and D. Corson, eds., *Oral Discourse and Education*, vol. 3 of *The Encyclopaedia of Language and Education*, Kluwer Academic, Dordrecht.

Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, Sage, London.

Beck, U. (2000) Risk society revisited: theory, politics and research programs, in B. Adam, U. Beck and J. van Loon, eds., *The Risk Society and Beyond: Critical Issues for Social Theory*, Sage, London.

Bell, V. (1993) Governing childhood: neo-liberalism and the law, *Economy and Society*, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 390–405.

Butler, I. (1996) Children and the sociology of childhood, in I. Butler and I. Shaw, eds., *A Case of Neglect? Children's Experiences and the Sociology of Childhood*, Aldershot, Avebury.

Cannella, G. and J. Kincheloe, eds. (2002) *Kidworld: Childhood Studies, Global Perspectives and Education*, Peter Lang, New York.

Cashmore, J. (1999) Child protection and substitute care: the responsibility of families, community and state, in J. Bowes and A. Hayes, eds., *Children, Families and Communities: Contexts and Consequences*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Castelle, K. (1990). *In the Child's Best Interest: A Primer on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Plan International, East Greenwich, RI.

Christensen, P. and A. James (2000) Childhood diversity and commonality: some methodological insights, in P. Christensen and A. James, eds., *Research with Children*: *Perspectives and Practices*, Falmer Press, London.

Clark, A., S. McQuail and P. Moss (2003) *Exploring the Field of Listening to and Consulting With Young Children*, Research Report 445, Department for Education and Skills, London.

Cockburn, T. (1998) Children and citizenship in Britain: a case for a socially interdependent model of citizenship, *Childhood*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 99–117.

Corsaro, W. A. (1997) *The Sociology of Childhood*, Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Danby, S. (1998) The observer observed, the researcher researched: the reflexive nature of phenomena, in Australian Association for Research in Education, *1997 Conference Proceedings*, AARE, Brisbane.

Danby, S. (2002) The communicative competence of young children, *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 25–30.

Danby, S. and C. Baker (1998) 'What's the problem?' Restoring social order in the preschool classroom, in I. Hutchby and J. Moran-Ellis, eds., *Children and Social Competence: Arenas of Action*, Falmer Press, London.

Danby, S. and C. Baker (2001) Escalating terror: communicative strategies in a preschool classroom dispute, *Early Education and Development*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 343–58.

Danby, S., A. Farrell, M. Leiminer and K. Powell (2004) *Children's Accounts of Governance in their Everyday Lives*, Technical Report, Centre for Innovation in Education, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.

Danby, S. and A. Farrell (2002) Children's accounts of adult-determined regulation in their everyday experiences. Paper presented to the Australian Association for Education Research Conference. Brisbane, 1–5 December.

Eekelaar, J. (1994) The interest of the child and the child's wishes: the role of dynamic self-determinism, in P. Alston, ed., *The Best Interests of the Child: Reconciling Culture and Human Rights*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Ekman Ladd, R. (1996) *Children's Rights Revisioned: Philosophical Readings*, Wadsworth Publishing, Belmont CA.

Farrell, A. (2001) Legislative responsibility for child protection and human rights in Queensland, *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Law and Education*, vol. 6, nos. 1 and 2, pp. 15–24.

Farrell, A., C. Tayler and L. Tennent (2002) Early childhood services: what can children tell us? *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 12–17.

Farson, R. (1974) *Birthrights*, Collier Macmillan, London.

Firestone, S. (1971) *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*, Jonathan Cape, London.

Foley, D. (2002) Critical ethnography: the reflexive turn, *Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol. 15, no. 5, pp. 469–90.

Franklin, B, ed. (1986) *The Rights of Children*, Blackwell, Oxford.

Franklin, B. (1995) *Handbook of Children's Rights: Comparative Policy and Practice*, Routledge, London.

Freeman, M. (1992) Introduction: rights, ideology and children, in M. Freeman and P. Veerman, eds., *The Ideologies of Children's Rights*, Martinus Nijhoff, London.

Freeman, M, ed. (1996) *Children's Rights: A Comparative Perspective*, Dartmouth, Brookfield, VT.

Freeman, M. and P. Veerman, eds. (1992) *The Ideologies of Children's Rights*, Martinus Nijhoff, London.

Friedman Ross, L. (1998) *Children, Families and Health Care Decision-Making*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Graue, M. E. and D. Walsh, eds. (1998) *Studying Children in Context: Theories, Methods, and Ethics*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Holt, J. (1974) *Escape from Childhood: The Needs and Rights of Children*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.

Hood, S., P. Kelley and B. Mayall (1996) Children as research subjects: a risky enterprise, *Children and Society*, vol. 10, pp. 117–28.

Hutchby, I. and J. Moran-Ellis (1998) Situating children's social competence, in I. Hutchby and J. Moran-Ellis, eds., *Children and Social Competence: Arenas of Action*, Falmer Press, London.

James, A. L. and A. James (1999) Pump up the volume: listening to children in separation and divorce, *Childhood*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 189–206.

James, A. L. and A. James (2001) Tightening the net: children, community and control, *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 211–28.

James, A., C. Jenks and A. Prout (1998) *Theorising Childhood*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

James, A. and A. Prout, eds. (1997) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood*, Falmer Press, London.

Jamrozik, A. and L. Nocella (1998) *The Sociology of Social Problems*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne.

Jenks, C. (1996) *Childhood*, Routledge, London.

Keogh, J. (1996) Governmentality in parent–teacher communications, *Language and Education*, vol. 10, no. 26, pp. 119–31.

Lansdown, G. (2001) Children's welfare and children's rights, in P. Foley, J. Roche and S. Tucker, eds., *Children in Society: Contemporary Theory, Policy and Practice*, Palgrave, London.

Mackay, R. W. (1991) Conceptions of children and models of socialization, in F. C. Waksler, ed., *Studying the Social Worlds of Children: Sociological Readings*, Falmer Press, London.

Mason, J. and B. Steadman (1997) The significance of the conceptualization of childhood for child protection policy, *Family Matters*, vol. 46, pp. 31–6.

Mauthner M. (1997) Methodological aspects of collecting data from children: lessons from three research projects, *Children and Society*, vol. 11, pp. 16–28.

Mayall, B. (2002) *Towards Sociology for Childhood: Thinking from Children's Lives*, Open University Press, Buckingham.

Mayall, B. (2003) *Sociologies of Childhood and Educational Thinking*, Institute of Education, University of London, London.

Mendes, P. (1999) Marxist and feminist critiques of child protection, *Children Australia*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 27–31.

Minow, M. (1986) A feminist approach to children's rights, *Harvard Women's Law Journal*, vol. 9, pp. 1–24.

Morrow, V. (1999) 'We are people too': children's and young people's perspectives on children's rights and decision making in England, *International Journal of Children's Rights*, vol. 7, pp. 149–70.

Morrow, V. (2001a) *Networks and Neighbourhood: Children's and Young People's Perspectives*, National Health Service, London.

Morrow, V. (2001b) Using qualitative methods to elicit young people's perspectives on their environment: some ideas for community health initiatives, *Health Education Research Theory Practice*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 255–68.

Moss, P. (2002) Time to say farewell to 'early childhood'? *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 435–8.

Moss, P. and P. Petrie (2002) *From Children's Services to Children's Spaces: Public Policy, Children and Childhood*, RoutledgeFalmer, London.

O'Neill, J. (1995) On the liberal culture of child risk: a covenant critique of contractarian theory, in A. M. Ambert, ed., *Sociological Studies of Children*, vol. 7, JAI Press, Greenwich, CT.

Phillips, B. and P. Alderson (2002) *Beyond 'Anti-Smacking': Challenging Violence and Coercion in Parent–Child Relations*, The Children's Society, London.

Pillow, W. (2003) Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research, *Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 175–96.

Prout, A. and A. James (1997) A new paradigm for the sociology of childhood? Provenance, promise and problems, in A. James and A. Prout, eds., *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*, 2nd ed., Falmer Press, London.

Roche, J. (1996) The politics of children's rights, in J. Brannen and M. O'Brien, eds., *Children in Families: Research and Policy*, Falmer Press, London.

Smith, C. (1997) Children's rights: judicial ambivalence and social resistance, *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, vol. 11, pp. 103–39.

Speier, M. (1982) The everyday world of the child, in C. Jenks, ed., *The Sociology of Childhood: Essential Readings*, Gregg Revivals, Aldershot.

Sutherland, E. (1992) The role of children in the making of decisions which affect them, in M. Freedman and P. Veerman, eds., *The Ideologies of Children's Rights*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, London.

Tennent, L., C. Tayler, A. Farrell and D. Gahan (2002) Use and integration of early childhood services: insights from an inner city community, *Australian Research in Early Childhood Education*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 113–24.

Tobin, J. (1995) Post-structural research in early childhood education, in J. Hatch, ed., *Qualitative Research in Early Childhood Settings*, Praeger, Westport, CT.

Veerman, P. E. (1992) *The Rights of the Child and the Changing Images of Childhood*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht.

Walkerdine, V. (1999) Violent girls and precocious girls: regulating childhood at the end of the millennium, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 3–23.

Waksler, F. (1991) Studying children: phenomenological insights, in F. Waksler, ed., *Studying the Social Worlds of Children: Sociological Readings*, Falmer Press, London.

Waksler, F. (1996) *The Little Trials of Childhood and Children's Strategies for Dealing with Them*, Falmer Press, London.

Wyness, M. G. (2000) *Contesting Childhood*, Falmer Press, London.